

The Oxford Pre-Modern Middle Eastern History Seminar

TUESDAYS, WEEKS 1-8, HILARY TERM, 2021

5.30-6.30PM VIA ZOOM

Convened by Edmund Herzig, Aslı Niyazioğlu, and Christian Sahner

Tuesday 19 January, 2021 (Week 1)

The Beginnings of Islam

Lena Salaymeh (Oxford)

Respondent: Khaled Abou El Fadl (UCLA)

[Register here](#)

***Lena Salaymeh** is British Academy Global Professor in the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA), attached to the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford. She is a scholar of law and history, with specializations in Islamic jurisprudence, Jewish jurisprudence, and critical research methods. Her scholarship on law and religion brings together legal history and critiques of secularism. She was recently awarded a Guggenheim and her first book (The Beginnings of Islamic Law: Late Antique Islamic Legal Traditions, Cambridge, 2016) received the American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion in the category of Textual Studies. She co-leads the Decolonial Comparative Law Project at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and Private International Law.*

Tuesday 26 January, 2021 (Week 2)

Before Sufism: Early Islamic Renunciant Piety

Christopher Melchert (Oxford)

Respondent: Michael Cooperson (UCLA)

[Register here](#)

***Christopher Melchert** received his doctorate in History from the University of Pennsylvania in 1992, supervised by George Makdisi. He has taught at Oxford since 2000. He has published over seventy articles in journals and edited collections, also The formation of the Sunni schools of law, ninth-tenth centuries C.E. (Brill, 1997), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Oneworld, 2006), and the subject of tonight's seminar, Before Sufism: early Islamic renunciant piety (Walter de Gruyter, 2021).*

Tues 2 February, 2021 (Week 3)

**Explorations into the Origins of Islam:
Religious and Philosophical Worldviews
of the Quranic *Mushrikūn***

Ahab Bdaiwi (Leiden/Cambridge)

Respondent: Nicolai Sinai (Oxford)

[Register here](#)

***Ahab Bdaiwi** is a University Lecturer in Late Antique Intellectual History and Medieval Arabic Philosophy at Leiden University, and the Cook-Crone Research Fellow in Ancient and Medieval History at Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge. His research is focused on early Islam and the long Late Antiquity, exploring religious, intellectual, and philosophical topics. He is the author of the forthcoming monograph, *Echoes of Late Antiquity in Medieval Islam* (Brill).*

Tues 9 February, 2021 (Week 4)

**Beyond the Mystical: how Hafiz's
poetry can help historians read post-
Mongol Iran**

Dominic Brookshaw (Oxford)

Respondent: Paul Losensky (Indiana)

[Register here](#)

***Dominic Parviz Brookshaw** is Senior Research Fellow in Persian at Wadham, and Associate Professor of Persian Literature at The Oriental Institute. He holds a DPhil from Oxford in medieval Persian poetry, and a BA from Oxford in Arabic with Persian. The current focus of Professor Brookshaw's research is the intersection between performance, patronage, and desire in texts produced by poets and other literati who were active in Shiraz in the fourteenth century CE. His most recent book is *Hafiz and His Contemporaries: Poetry, Performance and Patronage in Fourteenth-century Iran* (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury: 2019).*

Tues 16 February, 2021 (Week 5)

**Redeeming Books: Christian-Muslim
Relations through the Colophons of
Medieval Armenian Manuscripts**

David Zakarian (Oxford)

Respondent: Heghnar Watenpaugh (UC Davis)

[Register here](#)

***David Zakarian** is an Associate Member of the Faculty of Oriental Studies in Oxford and an Associate of Pembroke College. In his recent monograph, *Women, Too, Were Blessed* (Brill: 2021) and other publications, he explored the representation of women in early Christian Armenian literature. His recent project as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow (2017-2019) was dedicated to the study of colophons of medieval Armenian manuscripts.*

Tues 23 February, 2021 (Week 6)

Ottoman Historiography and Topographical Illustration in Manuscripts attributed to Matrakçı Nasuh

Zeynep Yürekli (Oxford)

Respondent: Serpil Bağcı, (Hacettepe)

[Register here](#)

Zeynep Yürekli is Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture at the Faculty of Oriental Studies. She specializes in Ottoman studies, though her research interests cover the late medieval and early modern Turco-Mongol Islamic world in general, extending to Iran, Central Asia and India. In particular, her research focuses on aspects of architecture, cult of the saints, hagiography, historiography and illustrated manuscripts. Her publications include *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

Tues 2 March, 2021 (Week 7)

The Language of Politics in Wā'iẓ Kāshifī's *Futuwwatnāma-i sulṭānī*

Negin Yavari (Columbia/Oxford)

Respondent: Alan Strathern (Oxford)

[Register here](#)

Negin Yavari studied medieval history at Columbia University. Her book on the rhetoric of advice in medieval political thought, *Advice for the Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (Oxford University Press/Hurst, 2014), is a comparative study of mirrors for princes from the European and Islamic worlds. *Mirrors for princes across political and spatial divides* is the subject of her co-edited volume, *Global Medieval: Mirrors for Princes Reconsidered* (Harvard University Press, 2015). Her latest book, entitled *The Future of Iran's Past: Nizam al-Mulk Remembered* (Oxford University Press/Hurst, 2018), is a biography of Nizam al-Mulk, the prominent eleventh-century vizier.

Tues 9 March, 2021 (Week 8)

Tribes, bandits, & minstrels: A shared popular culture as a response to Ottoman and Safavid power

Ali Aydın Karamustafa (Oxford)

Respondent: Edmund Herzig (Oxford)

[Register here](#)

Ali Aydın Karamustafa is a historian of the early modern Eurasian world. He is generally interested in literature and social history in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Russian Empires. His research project, which aims to turn his doctoral dissertation into a book, examines the popular song and storytelling tradition of Köroğlu (Turkish for "the blind man's son") as a

historical source regarding the expansion of Ottoman and Safavid imperial power in the Caucasus. Although his dissertation primarily examined the source for its insight on 17th-century tribal perspectives, the book project will broaden the time frame and include the modern period in its analysis.